COMICS INTERVIEW
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# X-THIEVES™

# "X-THIEVES" X-TRA!

**Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001**

In **Bob Ingersoll's** column in the COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE — **The Law Is A Ass** — he discussed ramifications of a relatively recent (within the last three or four years) change in the RICO laws. The RICO laws deal with racketeering and are aimed at giving the government the power necessary to fight organized crime.

So what's the problem?

The problem is the recent change. Racketeering used to consist of prostitution, drug dealing, gambling, etc. (It should be noted here that I feel none of those should be illegal, either, but no one in the government seems interested in my opinion.) Now it also encompasses pornography. Any businessman who is convicted twice for any RICO offense can have *his entire business confiscated by the government.* Even if the businessman appeals his second conviction and *wins* it is too late — the government will have confiscated his business's assets and sold them at auction to cover the cost of prosecuting the businessman. *It's already been done.*

"So what?" you may ask. So this — there exists NO DEFINITION OF PORNOGRAPHY. All it takes to make something "pornographic" is for a prosecutor to make a jury believe that it is, indeed, pornographic. Consider what this means for a moment. It is *entirely* conceivable that *anything* some person in a position of governmental power finds offensive — a newspaper editorial, rock music, whatever — could be labelled pornographic and anyone who sold those items could find themselves in court facing charges based on the racketeering laws. The person in power wouldn't need to convince all that many people — and, considering some of the verdicts I've seen juries handing down lately, I can easily see a prosecutor finding a jury he could readily manipulate.

What does this all boil down to? Simply put, the government has given itself the power to totally destroy any business which sells books, magazines, newspapers, or videos that don't toe the official party line.

Does this sound far fetched? Does it sound as if I'm over reacting to a minor situation? I've said so before and I'll say so again — I certainly hope I *AM* over reacting.

But I doubt it. Governmental power exists to be *used.* Governments exist to use that power. And I believe the power granted by the RICO laws will be used — and that scares the hell out of me!

Henry

Dear Henry, Mark, and DAK,

I was at my local comic shop the other day when I happened to see this comic called ARISTOCRATIC X-TRATERRESTRIAL TIME-TRAVELLING THIEVES. It looked cool so I bought it. It was so good I decided to get the other six immediately. They didn't have #4 or #5 unfortunately, so I had to settle with #1, #2, #3, and #6.

I love the art, it's great. Just one thing though, what happened to Bianca's lips in #6? In many of the panels her lips were different (bigger).

I haven't seen #4 and #5 so I don't know if they are different in those issues or not. But I know one thing, her lips didn't look the same as in the others issues or in Mark's original sketch of the two thieves.

She looked much better without them. Isn't reader satisfaction one of your main priorities? If it is then trust me, you'll want to "tone down" the lips.

I impatiently await your response to Bianca's lip shrinkage.

Maurice Martinez
No address given.

*You'll be pleased to know we immediately passed your complaint along to Mark and he asked me to tell you — no, I don't think I can actually print that in a letter column! Just kidding — Mark said he'd take care of it, so let us know if you don't think things get better soon!*

Dear Mr. Vogel,

SUBJECT: Your publication, designated ARISTOCRATIC X-TRATERRESTRIAL TIME-TRAVELLING THIEVES #6, December 1987.

ACTIONS: Pursuant to all of the regulations, sub-regulations, standards, rules, laws, ordinances, conventions, treaties, and agreements (be a nice fellow and don't make me quote the actual paragraph and section numbers, okay?), be advised of the following with respect to the above publication.

(1) It has been duly reviewed and deemed acceptable (with the meaning of the term as described in 178-65A-54b/#!65%*VF32) and may (well, actually, must — but we don't like to get tough unless we have to, you know) be sold with the sticker (form 675/976645/977-745454/A) stating "ACCEPTABLE (178-65A-54b/#!65%*VF32): Ministry of Fun, Comic Book Directorate".

(2) Pursuant to section blah blah blah, you have been cited for using the incorrect and unacceptable word "X-Traterrestrial" in your title. I am required to tell you that you may appeal this decision but don't get your hopes up, because I am not required to tell you how, where, or when to appeal and don't bother anyway because you'd only lose and it might go hard on you. Better to just pay the fine, the *reasonable* fine, right now. I could cite the regulation and give you an amount here, but really it just depends mostly on the moods I'm in when you come to pay for it, so be nice.

(3) Pursuant to I don't really care what, you have been given the prized Ministry of Fun "Longest Comic Book title (Section 657454 Sub-Section 65441a) Award". Congratulations. No award money. What do you think this is, the Ministry of Peace? We're not *made* out of money you know! COMEBACK TO YOUR ANTICIPATED PROTEST SO DON'T BOTHER: Whaddaya *mean,* you don't want the Award or the official approval?! Put on the sticker and shut up, okay? PERSONAL ASIDE (WE ARE SO HUMAN HERE AT THE M OF F!): Gee, Henry, we're just regular type people like yourself. Why not be nice and go along with us? (And no, I *did not* miss "the entire idea behind issue #6", wise guy!)

Yours officially,

"Lewlaf Maypul,"
Ministry of Fun
(*Not* a member of the Maple Family.
They tossed me out, the fiends!)

*Hm . . . If it wasn't for the great big, red maple leaf on top of the stationery this letter was written on, I'd be forced to consider whether this was real or a joke (this sort of thing being just the kind of activity I expect from government). Knowing it was a joke, I didn't bother putting that stupid little "ACCEPTABLE" sticker on X-THIEVES #6! And, as you can see, nothing bad has —*

*WE INTERRUPT THIS REPLY TO INFORM YOU, THE READER, THAT HENRY VOGEL, THE WRITER, HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY FOR DISOBEYING GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS PURSUANT COMIC BOOK LABELLING.*

*THAT IS ALL.*

# ARISTOCRATIC X-TRATERRESTRIAL TIME-TRAVELING THIEVES

SCRIPT/PLOT-- HENRY VOGEL • PENCILS/PLOT-- MARK PROPST • INKS-- KARL STORY • LETTERS-- T.R. DAVIDSON • EDITS-- DWIGHT JON ZIMMERMAN • PLOT-- DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT

A VOGEL, PROPST, KRAFT CREATION

## Pirate Edition

### Or: How We Spent Our Summer Vacation

VACATION TIME-- IT ONLY ROLLS AROUND ONCE A YEAR BUT HOW WE LOOK FOWARD TO IT! IT'S A TIME TO FORGET PROBLEMS AND HASSLES, A TIME FOR SLEEPING LATE, A TIME FOR AIMLESS DAYS WITH NO PARTICULAR GOAL...

FRED AND BIANCA, THE INCREDIBLE X-THIEVES, ARE NO DIFFERENT THAN ANYONE ELSE WHEN IT COMES TO VACATIONS! SURE, THEY TRAVEL A LOT ON BUSINESS BUT IT'S JUST NOT THE SAME. IT'S HARD TO ENJOY THE SCENERY WHEN YOU'RE CHASING A TARGET, EVEN HARDER TO KICK BACK AND RELAX WHEN YOU'RE PICKING A LOCK! BUT HARDEST OF ALL IS GETTING AWAY FROM IT ALL IN THE FREDMOBILE, A VEHICLE WHICH EVERY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY IN THE GALAXY IS TRYING TO TRACK AND INTERCEPT. SO...

PANSAFREDICOPACOS

BIANCA ARDEN

I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU, FRED-- USING A TIME-TRAVEL AGENCY TO SEND US ON OUR VACATION WAS A STROKE OF GENIUS!

MODESTY FORBIDS ME TO ADMIT JUST HOW RIGHT YOU ARE!

SINCE WHEN WERE YOU MODEST?

I'M THINKING OF TAKING IT UP AS A HOBBY.. OF COURSE, WITH SUCCESSES LIKE THIS IT'LL BE A DIFFICULT HOBBY TO MAINTAIN!

**ARISTOCRATIC X-TRATERRESTRIAL TIME-TRAVELING THIEVES No. 9, June, 1988. A COMICS INTERVIEW PUBLICATION.**

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THAT'S NOT *ALL* I NOTICE!! WEREN'T WE PAYING FOR THE *PREMIUM* PACKAGE?

OF COURSE! "EFFORTLESS TRAVEL" WE WERE PROMISED!

YEAH, YEAH. BUT--

AND "LUXURIOUS ACCOMODATIONS" IN WHICH TO RELAX OUR WEARY SELVES!

SOUNDS *GREAT* IN THE BROCHURE--

--BUT TAKE A LOOK AT THE *REALITY*, FRED! THIS DOESN'T LOOK A *BIT* LIKE THE CRUISE SHIP WE WERE *PROMISED*!

=GASP= FORGET ABOUT *REALITY*-- OUR LUGGAGE IS *MISSING*!

*WHAT--?* I *WARNED* YOU NOT TO DISGUISE THE FREDMOBILE AS A *SUITCASE*! WE COULD BE *STUCK* HERE!

NOT BLOODY LIKELY! I'M GOING TO *COMPLAIN* TO THE CAPTAIN RIGHT *NOW*!

I GUESS THERE'S NOT MUCH ELSE WE *CAN* DO...

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THIS CRUISE SHIP HAD BETTER BE "FULLY EQUIPPED" TO GET OUR LUGGAGE OR THE CAPTAIN IS GOING TO GET A "BREATH-TAKING VIEW" OF MY FIST!
HE'S GOT TO ANSWER HIS DOOR FIRST!
NOK
NOK
RIGHT-- SO MUCH FOR THE POLITE APPROACH! LET'S BARGE IN!
SNORE
LOOK AT HIM! DRUNK! DISGUSTING-- ABSOLUTELY DISGUSTING!
YEAH-- HOW DID A SOT LIKE THAT GET TO BE A SHIP'S CAPTAIN, ANYWAY?
SEVERAL LABORIOUS MINUTES OF SHOUTING, SHAKING, AND EVEN SLAPPING ARE FINALLY REWARDED WHEN...
SNORT
wha--? HUH?
SIR, WE WISH TO LODGE A COMPLAINT AGAINST YOUR COMPANY! THEY SENT US TO THE WRONG CRUISE SHIP AND OUR LUGGAGE--
CRUISE SHIP? THIS IS A PIRATE SHIP, BOY!
GADS!
YOU AIN'T NO BOY-- YOU'S A TALKIN' MONKEY! NAH-- CAN'T BE! THE DRINK'S GOTTA BE MAKIN' ME SEE THINGS LIKE--
--LIKE A GIRL! BE YOU REAL, GIRL?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN AM I--
TALKING MONKEY?
YEP-- YOU SURE FEEL REAL! HEH, HEH!

SLAP
DID THAT FEEL REAL ENOUGH FOR YOU?
I THINK YOU'RE FORGETTING YOUR PLACE, CAPTAIN! WE'RE PAYING CUSTOMERS, GOT THAT?
AND, AS SUCH, THAT MEANS YOU WORK FOR US! NOW THAT WE HAVE THAT STRAIGHT--
UM, FRED-- CAN IT!
DID YOU EVER HAVE ONE OF THOSE DAYS?

GOOD WORK, MEN! I'LL HANDLE IT FROM HERE! AND, JUST SO'S YOU KNOW -- THE GIRL'S MINE!
I'M WHAT?
SHE'S WHAT?
SHE'S WHAT?
IF JUST ONE OF YOU DARES LAY A HAND ON BIANCA YOU'LL ALL FIND YOURSELVES SWIMMING HOME! GOT THAT?

HA HA HA
HEE HEE HEE
OOK OOK OOK! IT'S DA MEANASS MONKEY!
HO HO
HEE HEE
HA HA
HEH HEH!
YUK
I'M SO SCARED I'M SHAKIN'!
HA HA-- YOU BOYS GET OUTTA MY CABIN NOW AND TAKE THAT FLEA-BITTEN CRITTER WITH YOU! YOU GOT WORK TO DO!
THE GIRL'LL STAY IN HERE TILL WE FIGGER WHAT TO DO WITH HER!
FLEA-BITTEN?! WHY I BATHE--
MONKEY--
--DA CAP'N SAID SO AND I THINK DAT MEANS WE GO! WE GOTS CHORES WHAT NEED DOIN'!
OBVIOUSLY THINKING IS A CHORE FOR YOU! NOW PUT ME DOWN YOU BIG APE!
I'LL PUT YOU DOWN-- IN A POT! I GOT A GOOD RECIPE FER MONKEY STEW! HAW HAW HAW!

STEW?!
STEW!
I AM PANSAFREDICOPACOG AND WE COPACOGS ARE AMONG THE BLUEST OF THE BLUE BLOODS!
WHAK
WE MAY BE LIGHTLY SAUTÉED AND SERVED, PERHAPS, WITH BEARNAISE SAUCE--
POW
-- BUT WE ARE NEVER, EVER STEWED!
HAW HAW HAW! DA LI'L GUYS GOT SPUNK-- I LIKE HIM! HE'S GONNA BE MY LI'L BUDDY-- AN' DAT MEANS NO COOKIN' HIM, BOYS!
OKAY, HOSS-- I HATES FOOD WHAT FIGHTS BACK ANYHOW!
GREAT, FINE, WONDERFUL-- NOW GET YER ASSES OUTTA HERE AN' GET TO WORK OR I'LL HAVE YER HIDES!
AIN'T NO NEED TO GET ALL BOTHERED, CAP'N -- WE'S GOIN'!
COME ON, LI'L BUDDY.

THAT SETTLED, FRED IS LEFT ALONE AND, BY THE DAYS END, EVEN GAINING ACCEPTANCE FROM OTHER CREW MEMBERS...
I AIN'T WINNIN' SO I'S OUT!
YOU'S REAL LUCKY TONIGHT, BOB!
I WISH I KNEW HOW BIANCA WAS DOING-- BUT UNTIL I CAN TAKE CONTROL OF THIS SITUATION I DON'T DARE MENTION HER!
HM... I DO BELIEVE I HEAR THE SOUNDS OF GAMBLING AROUND ME! THIS COULD BE THE OPPORTUNITY I NEED!
GEE, FELLOWS, THAT LOOKS LIKE FUN-- WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING?
HAW! I AIN'T NEVER SEEN A MONKEY PLAY POKER AFORE!
LESS'N HE GOT SOME MONEY YOU AIN'T GONNA SEE IT TONIGHT!
AWK-- POLLY MAKE A MESS! POLLY MAKE A MESS!
HE CAN PLAY SOME HANDS FER ME! I, UH, GOT SOME MORE CHORES WHAT NEED DOIN'!
CHORES? THIS LATE? WHAT YOU BE THINKIN' ABOUT, HOSS?
NOT MUCH, I EXPECT. LIKE YOU, THINKING IS FOREIGN TO HIM.
YOU JUST TODDLE OFF AND HAVE FUN, HOSS! DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU WERE DOING WELL IN THIS POKER GAME, ANYWAY!
YEAH, BUT I BETS I DO OKAY IN MY NEXT GAME! IT BE CALLED POKE HER!
HERE I COME, GIRLIE-- AN' YOU'S IN FER A TREAT!

SECONDS LATER...

OOOOOOH! AAAAAAAH!

CAP'N -- WHAT YOU MOANIN' 'BOUT?

I'M ≥GASP≤ MOURNIN' THE PASSIN' OF MY FAMILY JEWELS!

A LITTLE FURTHER ON AND...

YOW! OUCH! PAIN!

WHAT YOU DONE TO YOURSELF?

W-WALKED INTO SOMETHING..

THEN, AT BIANCA'S DOOR...

SPIKE -- YOU LOSE SOMETHIN'?

≥WHEEZE≤ ALMOST.. SHE ≥GASP≤ AIN'T SAFE, HOSS!

HAW, HAW! SOUNDS LIKE YOU GOT SPUNK, GIRLIE! I LIKE A GIRL WITH FIGHT IN HER!

OH, JOY... OH RAPTURE... BE STILL MY BEATING HEART -- ANOTHER ROMEO IS HERE TO WOO ME.

ROMEO? NO, I BE HOSS! AND WE BE GONNA HAVE FUN NOW, GIRLIE!

IF WALKING IN A CROUCH IS YOUR IDEA OF FUN, YOU'LL HAVE A BLAST!

WHAM!

OOOH! ≥GASP≤ DAT GIRLIE GOTS A WICKED KNEE!

I HOPE IT WAS GOOD FOR YOU, TOO, HOSS!

BACK WITH FRED...

GOSH, POKER SURE IS *FUN*, GUYS!

AWK-- POLLY SEES A *STRAIGHT FLUSH!*

I AIN'T BEEN HAVIN' NO FUN!

HOSS-- WHERE'VE YOU BEEN? YOU'VE BEEN MISSING ALL THE FUN!

I MISSED *SOMETHIN'* THAT'S FER SURE! BUT LOOK AT YOU -- YOU WON 'BOUT *EVERYTHIN'*!

I *DID* WIN EVERYTHING-- EVEN THE *SHIP!*

AND SINCE I *OWN* THE SHIP NOW, I HEREBY APPOINT MYSELF *CAPTAIN!*

SOUNDS RIGHT TO *ME*, LI'L BUDDY!

UH, UH! YOU A'N'T NO *CAPTAIN* WHILE I'S ON THIS *SHIP!*

JUST *KIDDIN'* FELLA-- CAN'T YOU TAKE A *JOKE?* PLEASE COME BACK FER ME!

AND, MOMENTS LATER, IN THE SHIP'S BRIG...

WHY ME? I WAS A *GOOD* CAP'N-- MEAN, BLOODTHIRSTY, GREEDY! EVERYTHING YOU COULD ASK FER IN A *PIRATE!* WHERE DID I GO *WRONG?*

THE NEXT MORNING THE SHORTEST PIRATE CAPTAIN IN EARTH'S HISTORY ADDRESSES HIS CREW...
ALL CAPTAINS NEED A GOOD FIRST MATE--AND I'LL HAVE THE BEST--BIANCA!
YOU MEN WON'T HAVE ANY OBJECTIONS TO TAKING ORDERS FROM A WOMAN--WILL YOU?
NO!
NO!
UH UH!
NOPE!
I SEE YOU ALL HAVE ENLIGHTENED ATTITUDES REGARDING WOMEN--I LIKE THAT IN PIRATES!
AWK--UH OH!
WHA--? MY CLOAK!
YOU STUPID BIRD! THIS WAS A CLEAN CLOAK!
AWK--POLLY COULDN'T HOLD IT!
YUCK! FRED--THAT BIRD IS GROSS!

LATER...
AFTER YOU, MY DEAR!
HOW GALLANT!
BUT, SUDDENLY...
COMIN' THROUGH! DUTTA THE WAY!
OOOO! DON'T YOU BOORS KNOW HOW TO TREAT A LADY?
YOU AIN'T NO LADY--
WHAM!
--YOU'S THE FIRST MATE!
DID YOU HEAR WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT ME, FRED? NO LADY, INDEED! WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE -- DEFEND MY HONOR!
NOT TONIGHT, DEAR -- I'VE GOT A HEADACHE!
DINNER TIME COMES...
GLUG GLUG AHHH!
THIS IS REVOLTING!
THE FOOD?
THAT, TOO!
RRRR GULP BELCH
GOBBLE BURRP
BUT JUST LOOK -- IF YOU CAN STOMACH IT -- AT THEIR MANNERS! IT'S ALMOST ENOUGH TO TURN A WELL-BRED THIEF TO THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW!
YES, ASSOCIATING WITH THESE --
YUM!
HEY -- YOU'RE TAKING THAT FROM MY PLATE!
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THAT'S IT!
LISTEN UP, YOU ILL-MANNERED, LICE-INFESTED, LOW CLASS MORONS!
YOU LEFT OUT ODORIFEROUS, DISGUSTING, AND ABHORRENT, FRED!
STOP EATING! AND PAY ATTENTION, YOU LOUTISH, ILL-BRED EXCUSE FOR A SAPIENT BEING!
OH, WAS YOU TALKIN' TO ME, CAP'N?
I'M TALKING TO ALL OF YOU! YOU CHURLS ARE GIVING THE DISTINGUISHED PROFESSION OF PIRACY A BAD NAME -- AND BIANCA AND I WON'T TOLERATE THAT!
STARTING IMMEDIATELY, WE ARE GOING TO CLEAN THIS SHIP UP! YOU'LL LEARN TO COMPORT YOURSELVES LIKE GENTLEMEN, LEARN THE PROPER WAY TO TREAT A LADY, LEARN TO EAT WITH UTENSILS, FOR GOD'S SAKE!
IS THAT PERFECTLY CLEAR, SAILOR?
UH HUH! BUT, UM,, WHAT'S COMPORT MEAN, CAP'N?

AND SO THE CLEAN-UP BEGINS...
THAT WHITE STUFF'S BURNIN' MY EYES! WHAT IS IT?
SOAP.
HAR HAR! LOOKIT ALL THEM BUGS JUMPIN' OFF A YOU!
=GLUB=
FIGARO! ♪ FIGARO! ♫ FIGARO! ♪
BESIDES SOAP, THE PIRATES ARE INTRODUCED TO MANY OTHER IDEAS NEW TO THEM -- PAINT, FOR INSTANCE...
THE CREW ALSO STRUGGLES TO MASTER THE CUTTING EDGE OF UTENSIL TECHNOLOGY...
EDUCATION IS A TOP PRIORITY...
WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT THIS WORD?
AIN'T
2+2=?
AIN'T AIN'T A WORD!
BOOKS, FOREIGN IN AND OF THEMSELVES TO THE PIRATES, ARE PUT TO GOOD USE...
AND MANNERS ARE CONTINUOUSLY STRESSED...
NEXT TIME WE'LL DO THIS WITH THE SHIP FACING INTO THE WIND!
AFTER YOU, MA'AM!
NICE TRY-- BUT... YOU'RE BLOCKING THE DOOR!
ARGH! TRY IT AGAIN!
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TIME PASSES QUICKLY, THE DAYS MERGING INTO WEEKS AND THE WEEKS MERGING INTO A MONTH! BUT FINALLY...
LOOK AT THEM, BIANCA, I DO BELIEVE THEY'VE GOT IT!
THEY'D BETTER BECAUSE IF THEY DON'T HAVE IT NOW THEY'LL NEVER GET IT!
GENTLEMEN-- IT'S TIME TO DISCUSS OUR FUTURE! IN THE PAST YOU HAVE SET YOUR PIRATING GOALS TOO LOW! YOU'VE TRIED TO LIVE PLUNDER TO PLUNDER AND NOW LOOK AT YOU! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FALL BACK UPON! YOU'RE BROKE!
AWK-- MAY POLLY BE EXCUSED?
PARDON MY INTERRUPTION, SIR, BUT WE ARE PAINFULLY AWARE OF OUR ECONOMIC PLIGHT! UNFORTUNATELY, WE KNOW NOT HOW TO ALLEVIATE SAID PROBLEM! COULD YOU ELUCIDATE UPON OUR CURRENT OPTIONS?
AH, WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T TURN A SOW'S EAR INTO A SILK PURSE?
YOU DON'T NEED OPTIONS, MEN-- YOU JUST NEED TO THINK BIG! WHY NOT TAKE ON A SPANISH SHIP-OF-THE-LINE? SINCE THERE'S NO WAR GOING ON RIGHT NOW, THEY'LL BE BUSY CARRYING TREASURE BACK TO THEIR KING!
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WE'VE CONSIDERED THAT APPROACH, SIR, BUT ALWAYS COME UP AGAINST A MAJOR IMPASSE! THE NUMBER OF CANNON CARRIED BY THOSE SHIPS MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR SUCH AN ATTACK TO SUCCEED!
IMPOSSIBLE? I DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF THE WORD!
IMPOSSIBLE-- NOT CAPABLE OF EXISTING OR HAPPENING, HAVING LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF--
AHEM! AS I WAS SAYING-- NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE TO A SHIP UNDER THE COMMAND OF THE X-THIEVES! I'VE ALREADY IDENTIFIED SEVERAL SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH YOUR BASIC APPROACH!
"TAKE THAT FLAG, FOR INSTANCE-- IT'S A TAD OBVIOUS, ISN'T IT? I MEAN, WHY NOT SIMPLY PAINT 'WE ARE PIRATES; RUN FOR YOUR LIVES' ON THE SIDE OF THE SHIP?"
I BELIEVE WE HAVE JUST ENOUGH PAINT LEFT FOR THAT SIR!
"I WAS THINKING MORE ALONG THE LINES OF REPLACING THE FLAG, HOSS..."
DAWN, TWO DAYS LATER. A SPANISH WARSHIP SAILS THROUGH FOG ENSHROUDED WATERS CARRYING GOLD BOUND FOR SPAIN...
ON BOARD THE SPANISH SHIP...
AHOY! SHIP OFF THE PORT BOW!
BEAT TO QUARTERS! RUN OUT THE CANNON!
SECONDS LATER, ALL OF THE SHIP'S DECKS ARE SCENES OF FRENZIED YET ORDERED ACTIVITY!

MEANWHILE, THE SPANISH LOOKOUT STRAINS TO CATCH A CLEAR GLIMPSE OF THE UNKNOWN SHIP'S BANNER AS SHE GLIDES EVER CLOSER!
SUDDENLY, HE SEES...
"I--I THINK THEY'RE FRIENDLY!"
'TIS A STRANGE BANNER THAT SHIP SAILS UNDER! WHAT KIND OF CREW COULD SHE HAVE?
MADRE DIOS! THAT'S THE CLEANEST, MOST ORDERLY SHIP I'VE EVER SEEN! MY COMPLIMENTS TO HER CAPTAIN-- AND INVITE HIM TO DINE WITH ME!

FRED GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTS AND, MOMENTS LATER...
THANK YOU FOR YOUR MOST KIND INVITATION!
T-THEIR CAPTAIN IS A TALKING MONKEY?
MIGHT I, UM, INTEREST YOU IN SOME EGGS TO BREAK YOUR FAST?
NO THANKS, WE'LL JUST TAKE YOUR GOLD!
THEY'RE PIRATES!
AT THEM, MEN!
FOR THE KING!
TAKE THAT, SCURVY PIRATE!
I SAY, HOSTILITIES ARE FUTILE -- PLEASE SURRENDER!
I'LL SHOW YOU FUTILE -- WHATEVER THAT MEANS!
THE SAME SCENE IS REPEATED ALL ACROSS THE DECK AS PIRATES GALLANTLY MAINTAIN A GENTLEMANLY DEMEANOR IN THE FACE OF THE ILL-MANNERED SPANISH CREW!
OOFE NOT A VERY SPORTING ATTACK, OLD CHAP!
QUITE A PICKLE I'VE GOTTEN INTO, EH, WHAT?
FRED -- THOSE MORONS ARE TRYING TO FIGHT POLITELY! AND THEY'RE LOSING!

YOU IDIOTS!
YOU CAN BE CRUDE WHEN YOU'RE FIGHTING --THAT'S AN ORDER!
IT IS!
WE DON'T GOTTA BE POLITE?
NOT DAMN! WE'S GONNA KICK SOME SPANISH BUTT!
P-TOW
AND, AS QUICKLY AS THAT, THE TIDE OF THE BATTLE CHANGES!
ATTACKING FROM BEHIND--I'LL BE SORELY ASHAMED OF THIS TOMORROW WHEN I'M COUNTING PLUNDERED GOLD!
EXCUSE ME, MAY I HAVE A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME?
HUH?
OWW!
THIS IS FOR STRIKING ME WHEN I WAS ATTEMPTING TO FIGHT POLITELY!
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL, FRED!
FRED?
UP HERE, BIANCA!
WHAT THE HELL--?
I HAVEN'T DUELED WITH THE SPANISH CAPTAIN, YET!
AND, ACCORDING TO CAROL'S RULES OF SWASHBUCKLING, I MUST DO SO!
LET US CROSS SWORDS, SIR!
GLADLY, MONKEY!
19

WHY, WHEN I AM SURROUNDED BY *APE-DESCENDED* LIFE FORMS, AM *I* THE ONE WHO KEEPS GETTING CALLED A MONKEY?

PREPARE TO *DIE*, ABOMINATION!

DIE, DIE, DIE-- I SWEAR YOU PRIMITIVE SAPIENTS CAN BE SO *MORBID!*

KLANG

OOPS!

WELL, WHAT HAVE YOU TO *SAY*, NOW, CAPTAIN? WHAT *INSULTS* DO YOU WISH TO HURL?

I--I HAVE *NOTHING* TO SAY!

COME NOW, A MAN OF YOUR STATION, AT A *LOSS* FOR WORDS?

I'M SURE, IF YOJ THINK LONG AND HARD YOU LL COME UP WITH SOME APPROPRIATE *CONVERSATIONAL GEM* TO LIVEN THIS MOMENT!

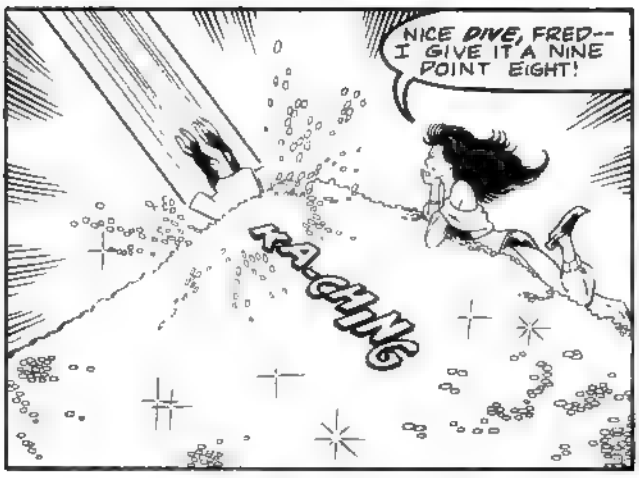
UM, I *SURRENDER?*

THERE, I *KNEW* YOU'D FIND THE WORDS

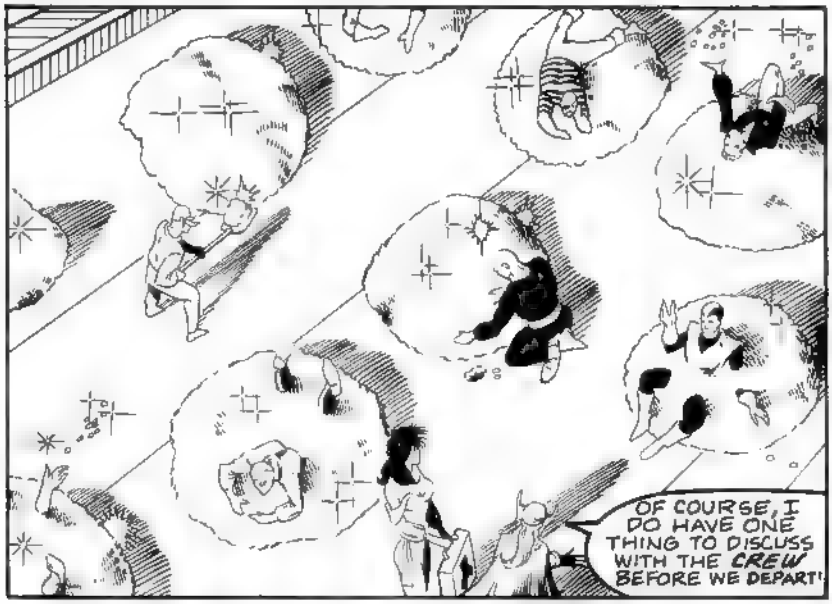
*THAT EVENING, BACK ON BOARD THE PIRATE SHIP..*

WE DID IT, MEN-- JUST AS I *TOLD* YOU! SEE WHAT SELF CONFIDENCE, PLANNING, AND *GOOD MANNERS* CAN BRING YOU?

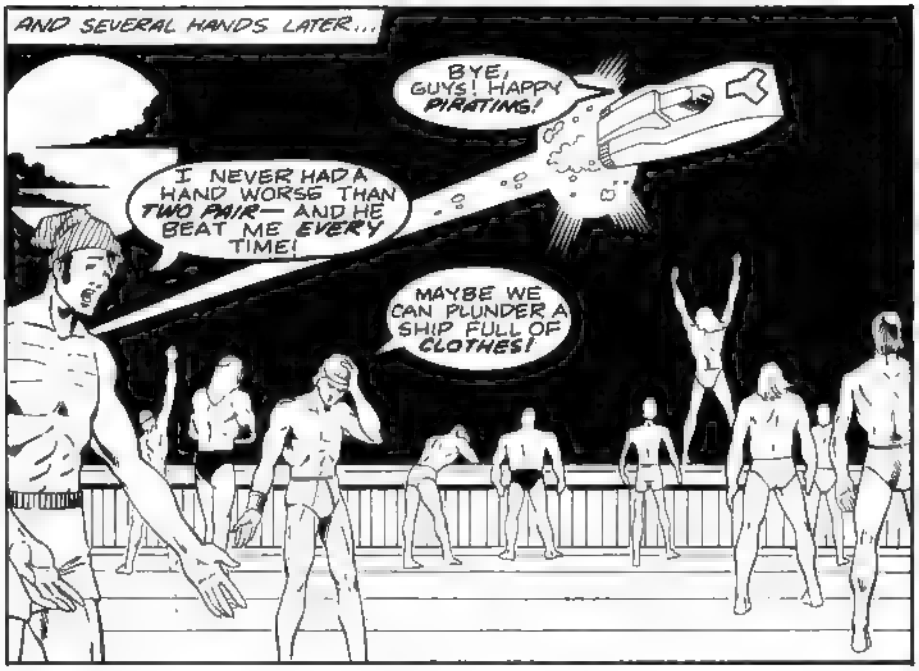
*AYE*, CAPTAIN!

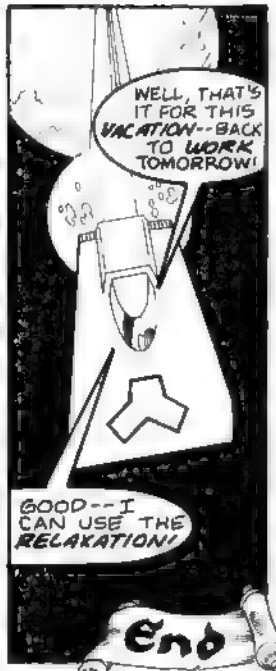

NICE DIVE, FRED-- I GIVE IT A NINE POINT EIGHT!
KA-CHING

HEY, LOOK WHAT I FOUND BURIED IN OUR SHARE OF THE PLUNDER -- OUR LUGGAGE! NOW WE CAN HEAD HOME ANYTIME WE WANT!
LONDON
ALFA
BETA
7
PARIS


OF COURSE, I DO HAVE ONE THING TO DISCUSS WITH THE CREW BEFORE WE DEPART!

YOU BOYS WOULDN'T BE INTERESTED IN A FEW HANDS OF POKER BEFORE I LEAVE, WOULD YOU?


AND SEVERAL HANDS LATER...
BYE, GUYS! HAPPY PIRATING!
I NEVER HAD A HAND WORSE THAN TWO PAIR— AND HE BEAT ME EVERY TIME!
MAYBE WE CAN PLUNDER A SHIP FULL OF CLOTHES!


WELL, THAT'S IT FOR THIS VACATION--BACK TO WORK TOMORROW!
GOOD--I CAN USE THE RELAXATION!
End

X-THIEVES
AGUARDO

# "X-THIEVES" X-TRA!

**Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001**

Guys —

Ran into a guy the other day at a local comics shop who was looking to find something new to read, so I pointed him at X-THIEVES. As I was telling him about it he seemed intrigued, but when he picked one up he went, "Ug. I hate black and white." He started to put it back on the rack so I grabbed it from his hand, bought it, and gave it to him, saying, "Here, it's yours. All I ask is that you read it." Ran into the same guy yesterday and asked him what he thought of X-THIEVES. He said, "Pretty good, a funny book, but I hate black and white." It must have been over his head.

Darrel Boatz
416 Woodbury
Macomb, IL 61455

*You're right, it probably was over his head — which could use a few good whacks with a two by four! In these enlightened times, it so pains me to discover there are still those who discriminate solely based upon color (or lack thereof).*

Dear Henry and Crew,

Ah, will the impositions on good, professional thieves never cease?! Poor Fred and Bianca! Having their vehicle break down! And being forced to deal with an auto mechanic! (Hey, never mind IRS agents! Auto mechanics — *they're* the plague on the common person! NOTE TO ANGRY AUTO MECHANICS: Please read what I have to say at the end of this letter before *really* getting upset with me. Please!) And then, horror of horrors, someone *stole* the Fredmobile! Fred and bianca were justifiably upset! They wanted their vehicle back! It wasn't just because it was their property, it was the principle of the thing! (Hmmm, come to think of it, it *was* because it was their property — at least in part!) So, they embarked on an empassioned crusade against the nasty thief and . . . Hey, wait a tick! Fred and Bianca are thieves too, aren't they?! Yes, they are! And *proud* of it too! And we're also supposed to be proud of them because Thievery Is Okay (especially compared to the scum-sucking Government and its dictatorial and moronic officials!), right? *Right!* Um, so why were Fred and Bianca upset . . . ? Gee, I must be *missing* something here . . . (Okay, okay — so maybe I'm missing it on *purpose*, but I'm not going to pass up an opportunity like this to be unreasonalby snarky, am I? No, I'm not!)

And say, *do* I have a reply to **Scott Bieser's** interesting letter? Why, Henry, of course I do! And you've already got it! (I know, you're just playing the showman to build up this "grudge match" between Scott and I — and a nice job it was too! Gosh, next thing you know, it'll be Big Maps versus Bulldog Bieser in a Spectacular Death Match Inside An Electrified Cage Filled With Quicksand! (Hey, *I'd* pay money to see that! Hulk Hogan, eat your heart out — or, more likely, someone else's!))

THIS PARAGRAPH OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO ANGRY AUTO MECHANICS: And yes, Henry, I know that you (and, no doubt, Scott) are saying that my point about auto mechanics being worse than IRS agents is not fair. This is because while there are many fine and honest and competent auto mechanics (there, not upset at me any more, I hope!) who serve the public well, and IRS agent is *by the very nature of the job and what it represents* an unfair imposition on the public, and can *never* be a legitimate and moral part of society! Say, who needs **Scott Bieser!** I can make *his* side of the argument just as well, right?! (So, Henry, it looks like after you print my reply to Scott's comments, that you'll be getting a letter from *me* to knock my arguments to pieces. Oh boy, just what I've always wanted: An intelligent debating partner!) (Just kidding!)

"T.M. Maple"
Box 1272, Station B
Weston, Ontario
M9I 2R9 Canada

PS: Geez, now I've got all the IRS agents out there made at me! Hey, IRS people — I'm not even a citizen of the United States! So there. (And to all the *fine* people at Revenue Canada Department of Taxation: I never said a *word* about *you*, did I? No, I *didn't*!)

PPS: Okay, Henry, so I'm a wimp. But I'm a *financially solvent* wimp! (That is, if I can ever pay off my postage debt to the post office!)

PPPS: Hey, maybe I *wasn't* kidding when I said I could debate with myself. After all, I've *talked* to myself for *years!*

*Ha! I suppose you think you've got me, don't you, TM? Well, you don't! No, indeed, I'm ready for this challenge! Here goes . . .*

*As you've stated, Fred and Bianca are upset because someone (or something) stole the Fredmobile. And they do want it back. But they are not being two-faced in this because they depend on the Fredmobile to make their living. Think back along all of the X-THIEVES issues, Fred and Bianca have never stolen anything that could or would impede anyone's ability to make a living! Had Sparky stolen something else, something not connected to their livelihood, then they would most likely have pursued him and tried to steal it back, but they wouldn't have taken it personally! And, just from my point of view, considering how powerful the Fredmobile actually is, don't you think it's a good thing Fred and Bianca have control of it instead of Sparky or some government that might try to use it to force people to go along with their idea of what is right? All things considered, the X-THIEVES use the Fredmobile very benignly.*

*So there! You didn't have me! Ha!*

# Authentic, Original MATT FEAZELL Convention Sketch

THE 25th CENTURY. THEY NEED NO DEATH PENALTY. THEY HAVE

# CYCOPS™

Dear Chuck:

You've got to be kidding! The Cycops as presidential Storm Troopers? Come on! Still, if you've got doubts, I'll try to set your mind at ease.

First, the Cycop Force is a division of the Interstellar Bureau of Criminal Investigation. The IBCI answers to the Department of Interstellar Justice. Yes, I know you know that. The point is, I'm not even in the chain of command. The accusation that the Cycops are my private army -- well, that's absurd.

The Cycops' true purpose is the same as it's been for the last 50 years: the protection of human rights. That's what we're here for, that's why the Human Coalition was formed: to guarantee civil rights on all worlds inhabited by humans. The Cycops make damn sure we all do our jobs.

To answer your questions about the Cycops, themselves: no, they aren't supermen. Yes, a Cycop can lift 2000 pounds. He can punch a hole through two inches of dura-steel. He can fight an army single-handedly. But only in Overdrive. The rest of the time, he's no stronger than you or I. And he can't stay in Overdrive longer than 30 minutes, because the stress will kill him.

As for the M-suits: I can't believe you swallowed that rumor about invincible armored warriors waiting to overthrow the Coalition. The Cycops' M-suits are designed to absorb impact. Otherwise, if a 'cop tried to put his fist through a two-inch dura-steel plate, he'd break every bone in his hand. The suit would also provide extra skeletal support if he tried to lift 2000 pounds. But an M-suit won't stop beam weapons -- like blazers -- so it hardly makes a Cycop invulnerable.

Now, about their internal computers: you've got that part right -- there probably isn't a computer system around that a Cycop and his comp can't break into. That's why we formed the Cycop Force in the first place (you'd be surprised at the kind of incriminating evidence some people will store in a computer). But in order to get that evidence in spite of sophisticated security programs, you need a computer which is pretty sophisticated, itself. And we just don't build them any more sophisticated than the one in a Cycop's skull.

I can't really tell you exactly how the process works -- I'm not a cybernetics expert -- but the 'tecs implant a tiny seed (more like a virus, really) in the brain of the future 'cop. That seed grows into a network that twines all through the brain tissue. No strand of that network is thicker than a few molecules, yet it interfaces with the Cycop's own nervous system. The result is a computer of extraordinary power and abilities.

Using the comp's control over his involuntary nervous system, a Cycop can go into Overdrive, or block out pain. It's also the computer that makes him inhumanly accurate with weapons, and that gives him access to data from the sensors implanted throughout his body.

I must agree with you that the cost is very high. I don't like the idea of drafting five-year-olds any more than you do. Unfortunately, the implant process tends to kill anybody over six. The decision to use orphans because of that mortality rate was cold-blooded, but it was also necessary to protect the government from lawsuits by any relatives of the children.

There is no doubt, however, of the benefits of the twelve years of training these children receive at Cycop Academy. All that martial arts and weapons instruction, as well as the classes in criminal law and programming, results in superb officers. Of course, it hardly makes for a normal childhood....

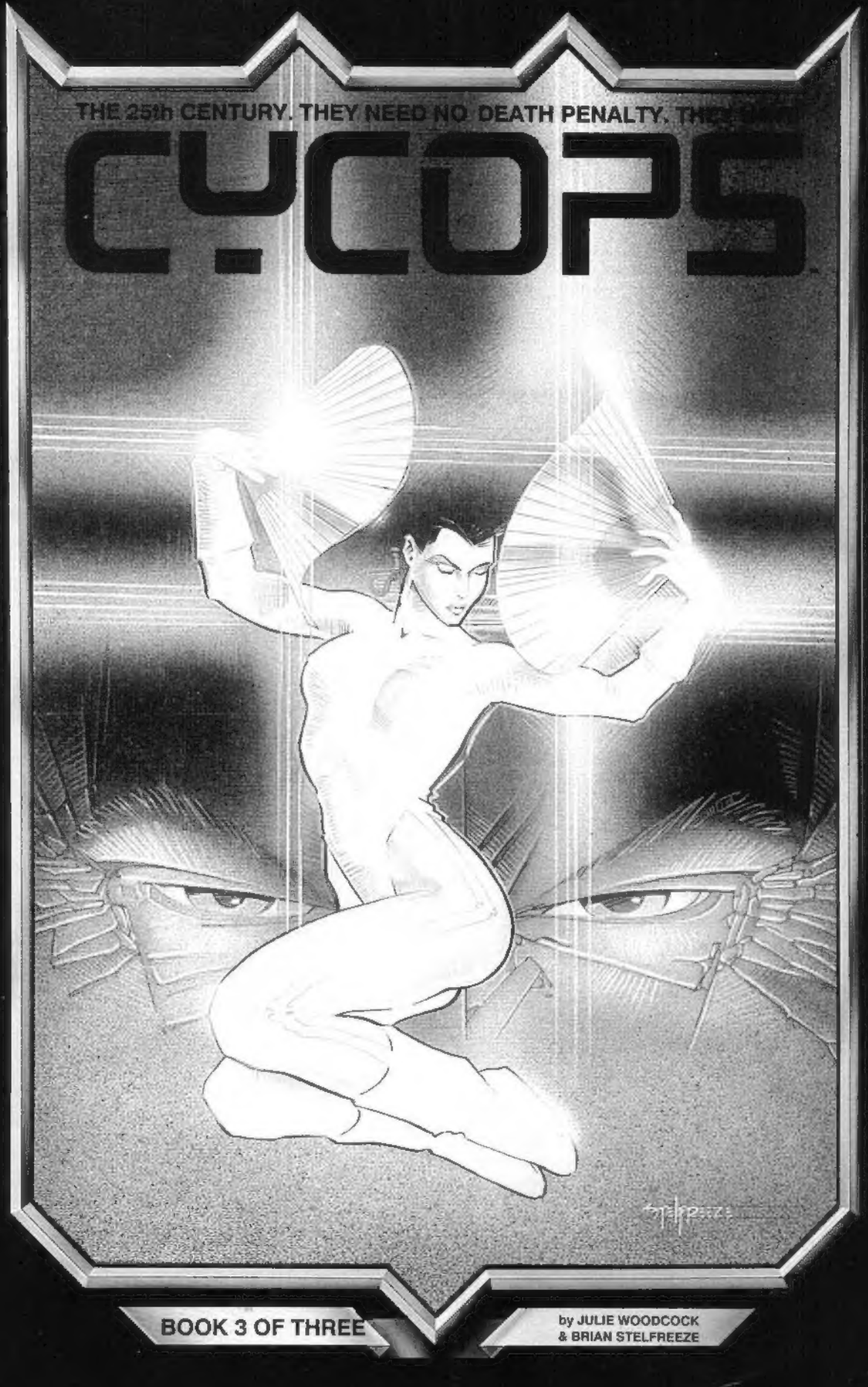
It's also unfortunate that one of the effects of Overdrive is the greatly reduced lifespan, but that was the price we had to pay. It's as if they live twice the life of the rest of us, so they live only half as long.

In short, Chuck, I really don't think the Cycops deserve your fear. What they do deserve is your gratitude.

And, perhaps, your sympathy.

-- President Dale Kamdr
September 29, 2453

by JULIE WOODCOCK & BRIAN STELFREEZE


THE 25th CENTURY. THEY NEED NO DEATH PENALTY. THEY
CYCOPS
BOOK 3 OF THREE
by JULIE WOODCOCK
& BRIAN STELFREEZE

COMICS INTERVIEW

# MAGNA-MAN THE LAST SUPERHERO

ON SALE NOW

T.M.

BOOK ONE OF THREE

## SUFFER NOT THE SAINT!